

FIELD
MESSAGE

U. S. INFORMATION SERVICE

Approved For Release 2004/10/12 : CIA-RDP81M00980R002000090163-1

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UNCLASSIFIED

FROM: USIS/PANAMA

Classification

TO: USIA WASHINGTON

INFO: SECSTATE WAS(DDC)
REF:

MESSAGE NO. 1

E.O. 11652:

January 24, 1978
DATE

SUBJECT: December Highlights

AGENCY USE

ACTION

I PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE

In December the parade of visiting Senators and other government officials coming to Panama to study the ratification of the treaties continued unabated. The list included Senators Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.); George McGovern (D-S. Dak.); James Pearson (R-Kan.); Mike Gravel (D-Alaska); Robert Dole (R-Kan); and Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), as well as Presidential Assistant Hamilton Jordan. Thus the lengthy process of providing first hand information about the Panamanian situation, and Panamanian attitudes on the treaty was going ahead, and the day when hopefully the Senate would ratify it was drawing nearer.

On the Panamanian side, everyone from General Torrijos on down, was devoting great amounts of time to the visitors, and while their patience began to wear a little bit thin, they remained optimistic that in the end it will have all been worthwhile.

II USIS PROGRAM

Two important USIS projects came to fruition with the media during the month. The Ambassador was the subject of a one-hour special television program shown on prime time on the evening of December 29. The in-depth feature program projected an exceptionally warm portrait of the Ambassador, and included both an excellent substantive interview as well as considerable background information on the Ambassador's life, his career and his family.

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USIS AND OTHER CLEARANCES

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The Post considers it a major accomplishment that at this sensitive juncture of U.S.-Panamanian relations, a program so strongly favorable to the United States, its policies and its principal diplomatic representative could be produced and shown, entirely through Panamanian efforts.

A second important project was an interview by the PAO on Embassy positions vis-a-vis the American residents of the Canal Zone. The article, which appeared on the front pages of the Sunday editions of both the Spanish language La Estrella de Panama and the English language Star and Herald on December 11, addressed a highly sensitive problem, the post-treaty bitterness and ill-feelings of many Zonians toward the Embassy and the U.S. Government. It was the first time in many years that an Embassy official had words of recognition and praise publicly stated, about Panama Canal Company employees. The article drew extensive favorable comment both from Zonians and Panamanians.

Press Placement: Over thirty substantive articles were placed, along with several IBS and IMV products. Among the best:

IPS: "Human Rights for All: A U.N. Challenge";

"U. S. Co-Sponsors Drug Control Measure in the U.N.";

"U.S. Official Says Cocaine Abuse is Worldwide in Scope";

"Panama Canal Treaties: Where they Stand Today";

"U.S. Negotiators Explain Financial Arrangements".

The article on Meridian House by Beth Knisely occupied an entire page in La Republica.

"U.S. Labor Assesses its Relations with Carter".
We could easily place more stories on the labor movement, especially since the AFL-CIO is backing the treaty.

Other good stories placed:

"Humphrey Plays Unique Role in Carter Hill Efforts";

"Jody Powell: Spokesman for the President".

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IBS: 175 Regular Package Programs.
Good VOA commentaries used on RPO television:
Middle East Activities December 6
Conclusion of the U.S.- Japanese Trade Talks December 19
Matching the Dollar December 28

IMV: The following films were shown on Panamanian television:
Vision USA No. 066 December 3
Vision USA No. 047 December 10
Vision USA No. 048 December 17
Century 3: The Heart of the Atom December 24

The Information Section was kept hopping by five CODELS with their customary demands for press conferences, news stories, media reporting, photos, transcriptions, clippings, briefings, VOA feeds, and very prominently, assistance to visiting U.S. newsmen. In one case, Post's support included a four mile hike by IO Howie Lane down (and up) a muddy jungle road, accompanying General Torrijos, Senator McGovern and the press.

Visiting US newspeople from all the media have been far too numerous to mention, and they consume a very appreciable amount of time, providing the numerous types of facilitative assistance.

USIS also provided considerable media support to the USAID mission during the month. There was a loan presentation to the Cooperative Development Bank, to the Panamanian Institute of Tourism (for a new convention center) and to the University of Education.

Cultural Activities: The month was inaugurated with a piano concert by Thomas McIntosh, outstanding Julliard-trained pianist, in cooperation with the Museum of the Panama Man. The Museum cooperated in the publicity for the McIntosh program which was well attended by several musicians, other pianists, and general public. This was the first cultural activity carried out by the Post in cooperation with the Museum, which was celebrating its first year of existence.

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Susan Irwin's "Plains Georgia" photographic exhibit was shown at the binational center and incorporated in its program for students. Several scheduled visits were made by the various classes, and the exhibit was then used as a source for discussion purposes.

A first-time visit to Panama by Dr. William Butler, Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, accompanied by Dr. Jacques Wilson, Assistant Director of Admissions for Latin America included a visit with CAO Elleby, who was informed of the university's interest of establishing educational programs with Panamanian institutions and who consequently recommended a call upon the director of the Human Resources Institute (IFARHU). Later follow-up information revealed that the IFARHU meeting had resulted in an immediate contract for the intensive English language training for 21 Panamanians at the University.


Stephen F. Dachi
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